



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 2, 2012

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager

Through: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager

From: Kevin Dick, Director, Office of Economic and Workforce Development
Grace Dzidzienyo, Senior Economic Development Manager
Peter Coyle, Senior Economic Development Coordinator

Subject: Grant contract between the City of Durham and the Museum of Durham History, Inc. for improvements to the Durham History Hub.

Executive Summary

This agenda item is a recommendation to approve the contract with the Museum of Durham History for \$47,145.00 to support improvements to the Durham History Hub.

Recommendation

The Office of Economic and Workforce Development recommends that City Council authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with the Museum of Durham History in an amount not to exceed \$47,145.00 for a grant to fund improvements to the Durham History Hub.

Background

In August, 2004, the Durham City Council accepted the Durham Cultural Master Plan. A high priority goal of that plan (Goal 6, Strategy 6.4) was to “develop a building in Downtown Durham for a history and cultural heritage museum.” On March 19, 2012 the Durham City Council approved a three year lease for the Museum of Durham History to operate a “Durham History Hub” in the city owned building at 521 W. Morgan Street. The building will serve as a home for the Museum as it continues planning and fund development for a future museum building and will serve as a location for programs and exhibits relating to Durham’s history and heritage. The facility and its grounds are in need of improvements in order to carry out its intended purpose.

On September 27, 2012, the Cultural Advisory Board voted to support use of Cultural Master Plan implementation funds for this project.

Issues/Analysis

The Museum has begun a \$197,184.00 project to renovate the building, the adjacent open pavilion and the surrounding landscaping. It has requested \$47,145.00 in support from the City for capital improvements and for the installation of an attached history information area combining a map of area heritage sites and an interactive touch screen display. Within that budget, the Museum and OEWD have identified several projects for which the requested funding would be used:

- The pavilion/gazebo adjacent to the museum building will be used for museum programming, public events and musical performances. Funding is needed to refurbish the gazebo's roof and shingles, to paint the pillars and overhead areas and to install electricity to build a small stage and a seating platform.
- Two outdoor signs will be installed to direct people to and from the History Hub. These will include a horizontal monumental sign located to the south of the History Hub and a sign to mark the entry to the Hub for people coming east or west along Main Street.
- The Museum will have to pay for the installation of a hose bib so that plants can be watered, as part of a landscaping project.
- The History Hub will be a jumping-off point for exploration of Durham's rich collection of heritage sites and landmarks. A large, mounted map will be key to raising awareness and building traffic for other Durham heritage sites, an important part of the Hub's mission. The map will be a permanent installation and a colorful focal point for the museum. It will also be flexible enough to accommodate timely events and special activities at the sites noted. In addition to graphics depicting permanent sites, such as the Hayti Heritage Center and Durham's state historic sites, the map will have up to 15 call-out magnets that can be used for special events such as CenterFest, the Bull City Blues Festival or the West Point on the Eno July 4th celebration. The Durham Convention and Visitors Bureau is funding design of the map and will provide site information cards that include directions from the Hub to historic sites.
- A large, interactive touch screen will make historical discovery easy and accessible for visitors. A menu will allow users to choose among *History Beneath Our Feet*, the Museum's unique gazetteer that introduces the men and women who lent their names to Durham's streets; the new Durham Digital Timeline, an online chronology of the major events and people who helped shape Durham's past; and valuable websites such as Open Durham, a highly interlinked archive/inventory of information on historical people and places in Durham. Placed just below the Durham map, this feature will be a permanent fixture that will provide visitors to the Hub with an overview of Durham's past and a starting point for exploring the rest of the museum.

Alternatives

Council can choose to pass this item, to not pass this item, or to change the amount of the contract. If full funding is not approved, the opening of the History Hub could be delayed and the scope of its offerings would have to be reduced.

Financial Impact

If approved by Council, funding will come from the Cultural Master Plan Grant Fund.

SDBE Summary

An SDBE Summary is inapplicable because no project-specific goals have been set and no SDBEs are involved in this item.

Attachments

- Contract Between the Museum of Durham History and the City of Durham for a Grant to Support Improvements to the Durham History Hub